



P10, R12-57

April 23, 2012

The Honorable Ernest Y. Martin, Chair & Presiding Officer
The Honorable Ikaika Anderson, Vice Chair
Honolulu City Council
City and County of Honolulu
Honolulu, HI 96813-3077

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HONOLULU, HAWAII

RE: Resolution 12-57 – OPPOSE

Dear Chairman Martin, Vice Chair Anderson and Members of the Council:

The Grocery Manufacturers Association¹ (GMA) and its more than three hundred members respectfully oppose Resolution 12-57 because such a mandate presupposes an issue with food safety and does everything to discourage investment in science and technology that could bring about more efficient operations and better, more nutritious foods.

Mandatory labeling of food products containing genetically engineered ingredients are misguided and unnecessary. The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) already regulates the introduction of and labeling of biotech foods. Producers are legally responsible to the FDA for the safety and wholesomeness of any food product placed on the market and all foods, regardless of whether they are produced using biotechnology or not, are regulated for their individual safety, toxicity and the presence of allergens.

Furthermore, after decades of scientific review, the FDA determined that genetically enhanced foods are equivalent to foods developed through crossbreeding, and other traditional methods. Thus, compulsory state labeling provides no additional significant or useful information to consumers. In fact, research shows that mandatory labeling of biotechnology products has the

¹ Based in Washington, D.C., the Grocery Manufacturers Association is the voice of more than 300 leading food, beverage and consumer product companies that sustain and enhance the quality of life for hundreds of millions of people in the United States and around the globe.

Founded in 1908, GMA is an active, vocal advocate for its member companies and a trusted source of information about the industry and the products consumers rely on and enjoy every day. The association and its member companies are committed to meeting the needs of consumers through product innovation, responsible business practices and effective public policy solutions developed through a genuine partnership with policymakers and other stakeholders.

In keeping with its founding principles, GMA helps its members produce safe products through a strong and ongoing commitment to scientific research, testing and evaluation and to providing consumers with the products, tools and information they need to achieve a healthy diet and an active lifestyle.

The food, beverage and consumer packaged goods industry in the United States generates sales of \$2.1 trillion annually, employs 14 million workers and contributes \$1 trillion in added value to the economy every year.

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negative impact of misleading consumers to believe foods derived from biotechnology are harmful when the best current scientific evidence indicates, they are not.

GMA supports a consumer's right to obtain important information about the health and safety of food products and we are committed to informing consumers about modern biotechnology. GMA member companies have made information available through consumer "1-800" numbers, supermarket brochures and were instrumental in developing the Alliance for Better Foods which has a website where consumers can obtain comprehensive information about food biotechnology.

Simply put, labeling food derived through biotechnology goes beyond educating the consumer about food safety -- it is designed to require "warning labels" that focus upon the process by which a food was produced. Requiring warning labels for these products will create a false impression that there are dangers associated with consumption of such products or that their nutritional value has been diminished. Furthermore, mandatory labels for these products would present a tremendous and costly enforcement problem to the state and result in huge costs to food processors, retailers and ultimately, consumers, while producing absolutely no benefit.

For these reasons, GMA respectfully opposes Resolution 12-57.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John Hewitt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Hewitt" clearly distinguishable.

John Hewitt
Western Region Director
Grocery Manufacturers Association